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SERMON

At the publick *Lecture*

Boston, September 4. 1746.

Dr. Colman's

SERMON

At the Black Lecture

Nov. 5th 1716.

The *Vanity* of Man as *Mortal.*

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the *Lecture* in *Boston*, September 4. 1746.

IN THE

Audience of the *General Court*,

The Morning before the *Funeral*

Of the Honourable

M^rs. *Frances Shirley*

Confort to His *Excellency*

William Shirley Esq;

Captain General and Commander in Chief of His MAJESTY's Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, &c.

By *Benjamin Colman*, D.D.

Pulvis et Umbra sumus.
Vivere si recte nescis, discede peritis.

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The *Vanity* of Man as *Mortal.*

Pſalm Lxxxix. 47.

Remember how ſhort my Time is : Wherefore haſt Thou made all Men in vain !

TO expreſs my *fatherly* Tenderneſs to my dear *Colleague* on his *firſt* Turn in this public *Lecture*, I do at his earneſt *Requeſt* in Feebleneſs and Fear venture to appear *once more* in this your *Audience*, (my Honoured, Reverend and Beloved *Hearers*) to bewail and improve as I am able the *Breach* which the *Sovereign and Holy GOD* has been pleaſed to make this *Week*, not only on *His Excellency* our GOVERNOUR and his bereaved *Family*, but alſo on our *ſelves*, the *Town* and *Province*, in the *Death* of His Excellent *Lady* and Conſort ; who firſt in her more *private* Life among us, and ſince

ſince in her *exalted* State, has exhibited to us ſo much of the *virtuous* and gracious *Woman*, with whoſe Character the wiſe *Solomon*, under a Divine *Inſpiration*, cloſes his admirable Book of *Proverbs*; — "*Whom who can find?* ſaid the MAN of exalted Wiſdom and Knowledge:— "Her Price is "above *Rubies!* The Heart of her *Huſband* doth "*ſafely truſt* in her, ſo that He ſhall have no need "of *Spoil*: She will do him *good* and no evil "all the Days of her Life: —— She is like "the Merchants *Ships*, ſhe bringeth her Food "from afar: She riſeth while it is yet Night, "and giveth *Meat to her Houſhold*, and a "Portion to her *Maidens*: She conſidereth a *Field* "and buyeth it; with the Fruit of her Hands "ſhe planteth a Vineyard: She girdeth her "Loins with Strength, and ſtrengthneth her *Arms*: "She perceiveth that her Merchandize is *good*, "her *Candle* goeth not out by Night:—— She "ſtretcheth out her Hand to the *Poor*, ſhe reacheth "eth forth her Hands to the *Needy*: She is not "afraid of the *Snow* for her Houſhold, for they "are all clothed with *Scarlet*: She maketh her "ſelf Coverings of *Tapeſtry*, her Clothing is *Silk* "*and Purple*: Her *Huſband* is known in the "*Gates*, when he ſitteth among the Elders of the "Land:— Strength and Honour are her Cloathing, and ſhe ſhall *rejoice* in Time to come: "She openeth her Mouth with *Wiſdom*, and in "her Tongue is the *Law of Kindneſs*: She looketh "*well* to the Ways of her *Houſhold*, and eateth not the Bread of *Idleneſs*: Her *Children* riſe "up and call her *bleſſed*, her *Huſband* alſo and he "*praiſeth* her: Many Daughters have done vertuouſly, but *Thou* excelleſt them all. *Favour* is "deceitful and *Beauty* is vain, but a Woman that

feareth

" *feareth the* LORD ſhe ſhall be *praiſed*: Give her " of the *Fruit of her Hands*, and let *her own* " *Works* praiſe Her in the *Gates*.

I know You are before me, *my Hearers*, in the Application of this *high* and *ſtrong Character* to the deceaſed *Madam Shirley*; nor will I *preſume* to add a Word by Way of Character to this inſpir'd and exalted *Encomium*.— Take it, and divide it among *your ſelves*, Ye venerable *Matrons and Daughters of New-England!* And may the moſt *Amiable* and *Honoured Daughters* of the DECEASED ever eminently appear and ſhine in thoſe *Ornaments* of the Daughters of *Zion*.

—But alas! my *Hearers*, that whenever it pleaſes the GOD of the Spirits of all Fleſh to form ſuch a Character in his Church below; and lend ſuch a *Son* or *Daughter* for a few Days, to *ſerve in their Generation* by His holy Will; that we muſt needs *return* ſo ſoon to the Words of my *Text*, and ſpread them before the LORD in the Preſence of all his *People*;— " *Remember how ſhort* " *my Time is! Wherefore haſt Thou made all Men* " *in vain? What Man is He that liveth and ſhall* " *not ſee Death! Shall he deliver his Soul from the* " *Hand of the Grave?*

Who the *Writer* of this *Pſalm* was, or *when* it was written is uncertain. It may ſeem by the *melancholly Concluſion* of it, from the 38th *Verſe*; to have been wrote by ſome holy *Man of GOD* about the Time of the *Babyloniſh Captivity*; when the *Glory of the Houſe of David was made to ceaſe, and his Throne caſt down to the Ground.*— The *Promiſes* of GOD to *David*, and his *Covenant* reſpecting his

Houſe,

Houſe are inlarged on in the firſt 37 *Verſes* of the *Pſalm*; and the *Faithfulneſs* of GOD to his Promiſes are *ſung* of, with the utmoſt *Aſſurance*, thro' that long *Period*: Yet how to reconcile the preſent *Face* of Providence with thoſe Promiſes, was beyond the *Force* of the pious *Pſalmiſt*'s Penetration: He therefore *drops* it, leaving it to the *Moſt High and Holy and True* to fulfil his *Word* in his own *Way and Time*: He therefore betakes himſelf to *Prayer* for the *Royal Houſe*, and for the *Church of GOD* imbark'd in the Fate thereof; and for *Himſelf* alſo as One of GOD's *Iſrael* who would be his Remembrancer for *Sion*;— "*Remember how* "*ſhort my Time is? Wherefore haſt thou made all* "*Men in vain?*— Where are thy former *Loving-*"*kindneſſes* which thou *ſweareſt* unto *David* in thy "Truth?

Moſt obſervable in theſe Words is the humble *Freedom* us'd by the *Pſalmiſt* in putting GOD as it were in *Mind*, beſeeching Him to *remember*! as if it were a Thing poſſible for His infinitely knowing Mind ever to *forget!*— and he preſumes (as it were) to *bring* to GOD's Remembrance a very *known Thing* and common; *how ſhort his Time* was, and the Time of *all* Men is!

See what a *Liberty in Prayer* GOD indulges to his People, to ſpeak *to* Him and *of* Him after their own Manner; as a *Child to his Father*, or a Man to his Friend! So *He* overlooks the Infirmity and the Impropriety of their Words, and accepts graciouſly what Faith and Love mean well.

And yet the *Pſalmiſt's Freedom* before the *Throne of Grace* goes further, and he even dares to *expoſtulate*

tulate with the *High GOD* upon the outward *Face* of his Government ;— " *Wherefore haſt thou made all Men in vain ?*—— So he pour'd *out his Complaint* before the LORD, and ſhewed before him his *Trouble.*

But far, *far* be it from us to *cenſure* the pious and fervent Servant of the LORD, or to think his Words *amiſs !*— elſe in a holy Reſentment one might be ready to anſwer, " *Who art thou, O Man,* " *that replieſt againſt GOD ?* Or *who ſhall ſay* " *to Him, what doeſt Thou !* Shall the Thing formed, ſay unto *Him* that formed it, *Why haſt thou made me thus ?* I will *anſwer thee*, GOD is *greater* than Man ! Why doſt thou *ſtrive* with him ? for He giveth no *Account* of his Matters.

But ſuch a Return as *this* to the *Pſalmiſt*'s Words, were to ſuppoſe them *chargeable with Irreverence* or Diſcontent before GOD ; which was *far* from him.— And yet the *Freedom* taken in *expoſtulating* in Prayer on ſo *Great* a Point as the *making Man* and all Men ! as if it might but *ſeem to be in vain*, though it may not be called any *contending with his Maker*, reſpecting his *Work*, as if he had *no Hands* ; *or a charging* GOD *fooliſhly* with that which really He had *no* Hand in ; but *Man* muſt take wholly to *himſelf*, having brought all the Vanity upon *Himſelf* by his Sin :— Yet it muſt be confeſſed to be a very great *Liberty* taken by Duſt and Aſhes, and a wonderful *Inſtance* of GOD's overlooking the Infirmity, *winking at the Ignorance* and accepting the Prayer ; for He conſiders that we are *Duſt* ; and we cannot *ſtrain* the Matter in the leaſt beyond the Prophet *Jeremiah*'s Meaning, in his xiith Chapter, 1ſt Verſe.

Righteous art thou, O LORD! yet let me reaſon with Thee of thy Judgments.

But paſſing the Manner of the *Pſalmiſt*'s expreſſing himſelf, let us attend to the *Doctrinal Truths* ſuggeſted to us in his Words; which are of the laſt Importance to us to *remember* daily, keep in Mind, ponder and improve: 1. That our *Time* here in the Body is very *ſhort*: 2. *So* ſhort as may ſometimes make us *ready* to think of our ſelves and others, that we are made *in vain*! And if it were not for the *Relation* which our preſent Life bears to a *future and everlaſting State*, it might juſtly be thought ſo.

The *firſt* of theſe *Doctrines* is ſo *obvious* a Truth, that there needs very *little* to be *ſaid* on it; how much ſoever we ought always to *remember* it our ſelves, and may *daily* carry before GOD the Remembrance of it; "*LORD, how ſhort my Time is*!

The HOLY GHOST admoniſhes us of it by the Pen of the *Apoſtle* that we may never forget it; "*Brethren, the Time is ſhort, and the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away.* 1 Cor. vii. 29. The bleſſed SPIRIT of Grace is alſo often telling us *how ſhort*, in *ſuch* Words as if the Thing could *not* well be told; "it is but as the *Shuttle paſſing thro' the Loom*; it is but as a *Hand breadth*, and our *Age as nothing* before GOD and in our *own* Eyes. Pſal. xxxix. 5.

The Time of *ſome* of the Sons and Daughters of Men is ſo *ſhort*, that they expire in the *Womb*, and never draw a *Breath*: How much *in vain* may

may theſe *untimely Births* ſeem! Who knows the *Way of the* SPIRIT or his *Mind*, in animating the curious Body which it frames in *ſecret*, never to *ſee* this Light of ours! Yet is it not done *in vain*! No, the *Spirit of the ſtill born Babe* returns to GOD that gave it, the *Father of Spirits*; and therefore is not made in *vain*.

Others die *from the Womb*; juſt ſee the Light, or fetch a Breath or two, gaſp and are gone! or live a Month or Year, and their *Angels take 'em*, which behold the Face of their *Father* in Heaven. Their few Minutes, Days, or Weeks are not in vain; for you know who has ſaid, Mat. xix. 14. *Suffer the little Ones to come to me, for of ſuch is my Kingdom.*

What Multitudes of the Human Offſpring die in *Childhood*, within the firſt *five*, *ſeven*, or *ten* Years of Life! They live to leave the *Breaſt*, *liſp* at a Word of *Love*, *run* to the Mother's Knee; begin to *know* a little, to read and ſay a Prayer, and *die* as they begin to be the *Hope* and Light and Joy of their Parents:— It is computed that a *third* die not *two* Years old, and one *half* that are born before *five*: Yet not in *vain* has the ſhort Life been, if we may *ſee* 'em one Day in Heaven; the Pains of *bearing* and Sorrows of *burying* will be well rewarded.

So if they die in blooming *Youth*, juſt beginning to bear and promiſing good *Fruit*, or having yielded *ſome*, they have not been in *vain*; but are in *Favour* taken, although it be from a *Crown* on Earth, like young *Abijah*, becauſe there was

ſome *good Thing* found in him toward the LORD GOD of *Iſrael.*

Or to give the *Reverſe*,— if they *die in Youth and their Life has been among the Unclean*; (as *Bildad* ſaid to *Job*) and GOD has *caſt them away* in their Tranſgreſſion; yet may we not *ſay* they were made *in vain*! no, though it be in Truth much *worſe* than in vain!— for what if GOD willing to *ſhew his Wrath* ſnatch away the Veſſel *fitted for Deſtruction* ſooner or later! *All Fleſh* muſt be *ſilent* before Him! but how much more will *Aaron* hold his Peace, and *Eli* anſwer, "It is the LORD, let Him do what ſeemeth Him good.

Or again, if an *Hezekiah* or a *Joſiah* be called to die in the midſt of *Life*, Honour and Uſefulneſs; we muſt not *chatter like the Crane*, or much worſe, and ſay, "Why were the *golden Veſſels form'd* and ſhown in vain? No, far otherwiſe: GOD will remember *how they have walked before Him*, while *they* and others may *mourn* in the *cutting off* their Days; yea while the *Church* it ſelf may *lament* as in our *Context*, "Thou haſt *caſt off thine* "*Anointed*, thou haſt *profaned his Crown*, thou haſt "*ſhortned his Days.*

To add no more,— At full and *Old Age* the Time is *ſhort*! at *three* and *fourſcore* Years it is *ſoon cut off*, and we *flee away*; as the *Pſalmiſt* truly ſings: Pſalm xc. : We have *gain'd* ſo little Knowledge and Grace, we have *done* ſo little Good in the World; we have been *guilty* of ſo much Evil, and have ſeen it may be ſo *many Sorrows*; that with the venerable *Patriarch* we muſt look back

back and ſay, " *Few and evil have the Days of the Years of my Pilgrimage been.*

But if we live *graceleſs and wicked* to the Days of *Old Age*, O then how have they been *in vain, and paſſed away in GOD's Wrath!* For wherefore do the *Wicked* live, become *old* and grow *mighty* in Power!— An *untimely Birth is better than he*, and the Sinner a *hundred* Years old is but the more accurſed! His Days are ſpent as a *Tale* that is told, and according to his *Fear* ſo is GOD's Wrath! Mark him, and be *aſtonied* and lay thy Hand on thy Mouth!— Dare not even in this ſad Caſe to ſay, " This *Monument of Sin* has been made and ſpared in vain! No, there's a *Judgment* to come, and remember the *Days of Darkneſs*, for they ſhall be *many*.

You ſee, my *Hearers*, that there is a Neceſſity of judging by *Faith*, and not by *Sight*; all the while we *live*, and when we die: if there were no *other Life* after this, the ſhort or long ſinful *hurtful* Lives of one and another in every *Age* and Place, were *much worſe* than in vain! The Sinners have only *deſtroy'd much Good*, and it had been *better* both for themſelves and others that they had *never been born*.— But it will *not* be found ſo in the *End*; the *Glory* of GOD and the *Good* of the *Univerſe* will be found *well anſwer'd* in the Day of Judgment; as we are told Prov. xvi. 4. *The Lord has made all Things for Himſelf, even the Wicked for the Day of evil.*

But if we *bound* our Sight within the *preſent Scene* of Things, and look *not to the Things unſeen and eternal*; there might then ſeem Reaſon enough

enough for the ſad *Exclamation*, " O why are *all Men* thus made *in vain !*— If we conſider only the *worldly* Circumſtances, and *preſent goodly* Appearance of Perſons and Families ; if we call up a *Job* and his *lovely Train* of Sons and Daughters from the *Dead*, and view them on the Day of their Devotion and *feaſting* together, *buried* together in the *Ruins* of the fallen Houſe ! and he that Yeſterday *ſat in the Gate*, in all the outward State and inward *Adorning* of a ſuperior and righteous *Judge* ; " his *Glory freſh in Him*, and Men " giving *Ear* and waiting and keeping *Silence* at " his Counſel ; " *they waited for* Him as for the " *Rain*, and opened their Mouth *wide* as for the " latter Rain ; (" the *Oracle* and *Darling* of his " Country *) when the *Ear* heard him it *bleſſed* " him, and when the *Eye* ſaw him it gave Wit- " neſs to him ; He put on *Righteouſneſs* and it " clothed him, and his *Judgment* was to him for " a *Robe and* Diadem *!*—— But to *morrow* he is ſeen with Compaſſion and Surprize, a *Spectacle of Poverty*, *Diſtreſs and Woe* ; ſtript of *Eſtate* and Family, without a Child or almoſt a Servant to attend him ; *deform'd* alſo by a *gaſtly Diſeaſe* and cover'd with *putid Sores*, ſo as not to be *known* by his *Friends* ; ſo that they lift up their *Voice*, and *wail'd* him !— And had he *died* in this Extremity, had he been form'd and *rais'd* in *vain ?* No ! he had *ſerv'd his Generation* gloriouſly by the Will of GOD, and knew that *his Redeemer* liv'd, whom he ſhould *ſee for Himſelf* one Day upon the Earth ; and *his Eyes ſhould behold him*, though now his *Reins were conſuming* within him : Job xix. 25, 26. He was a *Type* of his REDEEMER

* Mr. *Henry*.

in

in his *Sorrows*, and is with HIM in his *Joys*, and will come with *Him* in his Glory, in the Day of the *Reſtitution* of all Things; when this *Corruptible* ſhall put on *Incorruption*, and this *mortal* Immortality, and *Death will be ſwallow'd up in Victory*, 1 Cor. Chap. xv.

Let us recur in our Meditation to the *tragical Dying of righteous* Abel in his early Piety, or to the *placid Death-Bed of aged Jacob* with his *Sons about him*, and his *Joſeph* cloſing his Eyes with Tears and *Kiſſes*: theſe very different Views of Death agree in this, that neither of them ſhow the *Good Man* made in *vain*; but equally to the *beſt* that can be propoſed by GOD or conceiv'd by us.

Let us view (I ſay) righteous *Abel* in all the Charms of florid *Youth and Grace* together, one Day with his *Sacrifice* at the *Altar* of GOD, and a *Light* from Heaven ſhining around him and *irradiating* his beauteous Face! And the next Day view him cover'd with *Gore*, deform'd with gaſtly *Wounds*, beſmear'd with Dirt and *Blood!* how had his *early Piety* and high Devotion ſeem'd in *vain*; but for the *Crown of Martyrdom* remaining to him in a future eternal Life! and at the *Head* of the *noble Army of Martyrs*, Confeſſors of the *Lamb ſlain* in the midſt of the *Throne!* Rev. vii. 14. *Theſe are they* that come out of *great Tribulation*, and have *waſhed their Robes* and made 'em "white *in the Blood of the* LAMB: Therefore are "they before the *Throne* of GOD, and ſerve him "Day and Night in his *Temple!* they ſhall "*hunger* no more, nor *thirſt* any more, &c.

But

But let us pass from the *Blood of Abel*, *crying* from the *Earth* against his Brother; unto the *Death-Bed of aged Jacob*, the good old *Patriarch willing* to be gone, *waiting for the Salvation of GOD*, desiring to *depart* (like blessed *Paul* 2300 Years after him) and to be *with Christ*, as *far* the better; calling his *Sons* to take his parting Prayer, to bless *them* all together, and every One apart and by *Name*; his *Joseph* also in the midst of them, and *Judah* even greater than he in the Benediction, but not in *Desert*; for the Reward is of *Grace*. View (I say) this *Jacob wrestling* for the Blessing even in his Mother's *Womb*, as well as with the *Angel* long after and prevailing, as a *Prince* that had Power with GOD! Consider him in his continual *Advances* in Wisdom and Communion with GOD unto *old Age*; his *hoary Head* and *wrinkled Brow* a *Crown of Glory*, in the Ways of Righteousness and Devotion:— Add to him such of *his Sons* as were most *like Him* in their Generations, in their advanced Years also and Improvements in Grace;— *Joseph*, *Moses*, *Joshua*, *Samuel*, *David*; with *Elias* that never saw Death, and his Successor *Elisha* more *magnificent* on his *Death-Bed* than the *King and all his Court* gather'd about it, and owning Him as much the *Chariot of Israel* as his *Master Elijah* had been before him: Add to these the *New-Testament Elias*, with his *Head* in a *Charger* and *more than a Prophet*; and think how *Simeon* expir'd, with the *Holy Child* JESUS in his Arms, say some: and imagine also the *Transports* of a *Stephen* stoned under the *Visions* of JESUS through the open'd Heavens, and standing on the Right Hand of GOD! And add to all your Thoughts of the *Joys* of the Beloved of JESUS, St. *John* and *Paul*, as the Time of *their* Departure came on!

Contemplate

Contemplate all *these* in the *Shades of Death*, after their ſerving their *Generations* by the Will of GOD; and although their *Labour* and Suffering were not at all *in vain in the* LORD; nevertheleſs if it were not for their *Relation* to a *better Country*, that is an *heavenly*, and their *Inheritance with the Saints in Light*, at the Head of *whom* theſe ſhine; — What would they have thought of *their Life* here below? however eminently *happy and uſeful*, and honour'd of GOD they were in Compariſon of others!—— So *Jacob* paus'd, and took Breath, in the midſt of his *bleſſing* his Sons, in that happy *Parentheſis*, "*I have waited for thy Salvation, O* LORD.— And *ſuch* had been the *Faith* and Hope and Joy of his dying *Fathers*, the *Patriarchs* before him; as the *Apoſtle* to the Hebrews tells us, Heb. xi. 13, 15. *Theſe all died in Faith, deſiring a better Country, that is a Heavenly; confeſſing themſelves Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth.*

But though we may *thus* make ſome Allowance to the *beſt* of Men, or ſome Kind of *Excuſe* for them, after the *beſt* Life of Services to GOD and *Communion* with Him, that has been attained in this *Earth* of ours; if upon their *Review* of all that they have *known* of GOD or *done* for his Name, they readily own the *Vanity* and *Emptineſs* of it all; if it were not for their *ſure and certain Hope* of a higher and better Life, reſerved for them in *Heaven*, after the Diſſolution of their Bodies; — yet we muſt *recollect* our ſelves, and *affirm* conſtantly, that *Theſe* among the Sons and Daughters of Men, (the whole *Election* of Grace, the *Elect Lady and her Children* as well as *John* himſelf) have by no Means been *made in vain!* no, far otherwiſe; their *Labours* have not been in vain

in the LORD, but their *Works* follow them, and will be *openly* acknowledged and gloriously rewarded in the Day of CHRIST; and their *Charities* to his *poor* Members in particular, while they will still call themselves *unprofitable Servants*: Matth. xxv. 34, &c. "Then shall the *King* say to them on his "*right Hand*, Come ye *blessed* of my FATHER, "inherit the *Kingdom* prepared for you from the "Foundation of the World; for I was *hungry* "and ye gave me *Meat*, *thirsty* and ye gave me "*Drink*; a *Stranger* and ye took me in, naked "and ye *clothed* me; I was *sick* and ye visited "me; I was in *Prison* and ye came to me. "Then shall the *Righteous* answer, "Lord, when "did we so!—— And the *King* shall reply,—— "Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have "done it unto one of the least of these my *Bre*-"*thren*, ye did it unto *Me*.

But we must *go on* yet much *further* in the Argument before me, and say,— GOD has made *nothing in vain*, and much less *Man*: no not so much as *one single* Person, greater or *less*, better or *worse*, in *vain*:— *Far* be it from *Him*, whose Work is *perfect*; and nothing can hinder his everlasting *Glory* from it! no, not the *Sin and Misery* of *any* of his Creatures, *Men or Devils*.

How *far* was *Man* in his *first Estate* from being made *a vain* Creature! He was made a *living Soul*, in the *Image of* GOD; an *immortal* Spirit, wise *holy* and *happy*; and for an everlasting *Increase* in Knowledge and Holiness and *Blessedness*, in a Life of *Worship and Obedience*:— And altho' by *Sin* he soon subjected *himself*, and the *Creatures* under his Feet, to the Vanity and *Bondage of Death* and

and Corruption ;— and although the *moſt* of the Children of *Adam* are *wilfully periſhing* in their ſpiritual *Corruption* ; yet there is an *Election of Grace* in whom GOD will *glorify his Holineſs* and Mercy for ever and ever, by recovering them here to a State of *Communion* with Himſelf, preparatory for and an Earneſt of the Tranſlation of their *Souls at Death*, and after the *Reſurrection* Soul and Body united to the Viſions of his Glories in Heaven.

Then every Mark and Sign of Sin and *Vanity* ſhall be done *away* for ever ; and the *Redeemed* from our Earth ſhall ſhine forth in the Kingdom of their *Saviour*, in the *Paradiſe* above, in more than *transfigur'd* Bodies ; and in what *irradiated* Souls !— how much *fairer* and brighter than *Adam* and *Eve* at firſt in the *Garden* of God below ; in their *Innocence*, Integrity and earthly Happineſs ! in what Knowledge, Purity and Joy ! like that of the *holy Angels* who ſtand and miniſter (with *covered Faces*) before the Throne : according to what we read *Pſalm* xvi. ult. *Therefore my Heart is glad and my Glory rejoices ; my Fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in Hope ; thou wilt ſhew me the Path of Life ; in thy Preſence is Fulneſs of Joy, and at thy right Hand are Pleaſures for evermore. Rev.* xxii. 3, 4, 5. " And there ſhall " be *no more Curſe*, but the *Throne of GOD and* " *of the Lamb* ſhall be in it, and his Servants " ſhall ſerve Him ! and they ſhall *ſee his Face*, " and his *Name* ſhall be in their *Foreheads !* " and there ſhall be *no Night* there ; for the " LORD GOD giveth them *Light*, and they ſhall " *reign* for ever and ever.

Here let our View of *Sin* and *Death* and *Vanity* end as to the *righteous*; for here muſt be the *Abolition* of it for ever and ever, as to *them*; " *Mortality being ſwallowed up of Life.* This is the *Reſtitution* of all Things, and of *Man* to his Poſſeſſion of the *heavenly Inheritance*, purchaſed by JESUS CHRIST for his *Elect* and *them* for it.

O how far then will the *leaſt of theſe* ſeem from having been made in *vain*, in this Day of the " Manifeſtation of the Sons and Daughters of GOD? O to what a glorious Purpoſe will it then appear, that Man was created in the Likeneſs and Love of GOD? ſince out of his fallen Loyns GOD has raiſed ſo many Children to eternal Glories! of whom He has ſaid, and will ſay for ever, " Ye are my Sons and Daughters, ſaith the LORD Almighty. —— See their *Number* and *Glory*, and hear their *Songs* of Joy, and read their endleſs Bliſs: Revel. vii. 9, 10, 15, 16, 17. " After this I beheld, and lo a " great *Multitude*, which no Man can *number*, " of *all Nations*, and Kindreds and People and " Tongues, ſtood before the *Throne* and before " the *Lamb*; clothed with *white Robes* and " with *Palms* in their Hands; and cried with " a *loud Voice*, ſaying; *Salvation* to our GOD " which ſitteth upon the *Throne*, and to the " *Lamb!* Theſe are they that came out of " *great Tribulation*, and have *waſhed their Robes* " and made them *white* in the Blood of the " *Lamb:* —— therefore are they before the " *Throne* of GOD, and ſerve Him Day and " Night in his Temple; and He that *ſitteth* " on the Throne ſhall dwell among them! " they ſhall *hunger* no more, nor *thirſt* any " more;

" more ; neither ſhall the *Sun* light on them, " nor any *Heat* ; for the *Lamb* which is in " the midſt of the *Throne* ſhall lead them to " living *Fountains* of Waters ; and GOD ſhall " wipe away all *Tears* from their Eyes.

USE. And ſo I come to make ſome practical *Reflections* on this *vain Life* of Man, in his corrupted *Fleſh*, which GOD had *no Hand* in ! this *Vanity* of Man as *mortal*, which is altogether of Himſelf.

And is it as we have been hearing, that our *Time* here on Earth is ſo very *ſhort*, and our *State* ſo *vain* becauſe ſo very *ſinful* ; ſo that we may be *ready* at times to *think and ſay* of it, in our moſt *ſerious Frames* and Hours, — " O *why* is *Man* made thus altogether, as it were, for Nought and *in vain ?* ſo abandoned to *Sin and Miſery*, and *void* of Goodneſs and Happineſs ? — Yet let us recover out of this *falſe Medium*, whereby the *Sight of* GOD and of our *Selves* is obſcured ; — that we may make a juſt and righteous *Improvement* of the *Infelicities* we have brought upon our Selves.

Firſt then, What a dreadful Thing is SIN ? and what a Puniſhment of it is *Mortality* and Death. Man little underſtood or weighed the *Warning* given him in his State of Innocence ; " *In the Day thou eateſt, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* The firſt *Sight* of Death on the *Beaſts* ſlain in Sacrifice, was without Doubt not a little affecting to our *firſt Parents*, but the *hideous* Face of it in their lovely *Abel* ſtruck them with a *Horror* not to be imagined.—— The Sorrows

Sorrows of *burying her Sons* chang'd the *fair Naomi* into an *unknown Thing*; "*Is this Naomi?* And yet theſe are but the *lighter* Part of the *Curſe*, which the moſt *pious* are ſubject to, and *Faith* has many a Time born gloriouſly: *Luke* xii. 4. "I "ſay unto you *my Friends*, *Fear not them that* "*can kill the Body*, and after that have *no more* "that they can do! but I will forewarn you "*Whom* you ſhall *fear*! HIM *that can caſt the* "*Soul into Hell*! I ſay unto you *fear Him.*—— Yet alas, how is *Sin puniſh'd in us*, and before our *Eyes*, in the preſent *Life!* "Call for the *mourning Women*, ſaid the gracious *Prophet*, for *Death* "is in the *Streets*, and at our *Windows!*— It tears the ſucking *Child* from the *Mother's* Breaſt, and *the Deſire of the Eyes* with a *Stroke* from the Arms of her *Huſband*. The tender Soul of JESUS was moved exceedingly as he ſaw the *Widow* following *her Son* to the Grave, and he *wept* at the Grave of *Lazarus*. Alas, how is Sin puniſh'd in us, in the *Sickneſſes and Pains* and Corruption which often preceed Death, as well as in the Putrefaction that always *follows* it. What *Months of Vanity* were appointed to *Job*, and *weariſome Nights?* Job vii. 3. His *Fleſh was clothed with Worms and Clods of Duſt*; his *Skin* broken and become *loathſome*. Chap. x. 9, 18. *Remember* I beſeech thee, that thou haſt made me as the *Clay*, and *wilt* thou bring me into *Duſt* again? *Wherefore* then haſt thou brought me out of the Womb? O that I had given up the *Ghoſt*, and *no Eye* had ſeen me.

Secondly, The *vainer* our Life is, and the *ſhorter* our Time, the more let us be excited to a holy Care and Vigilance, that it may not *ſeem* to our ſelves

ſelves or others, to have been altogether *loſt and in vain* : But let us indeed think our ſelves *made in vain*, if the *End of Life* be not in ſome Meaſure *conſider'd* by us, anſwer'd and *attained* : Elſe (as the wiſe *Solomon* ſays) an *untimely Birth is better* ! better than *He*, the Days of whoſe Years are *many* and his Soul not filled *with Good* done in them ; for he cometh in with *Vanity*, and departeth in Darkneſs, and his *Name* ſhall be covered with *Darkneſs*, Eccleſ. vi. 4. To let a *ſhort* Life run *away* in Vanity and Sin, in doing *nothing*, or in doing *evil* ; in the Neglect of GOD and our Souls, and to the Diſhonour and Wrong of *both* ; — what an egregious Piece of Folly and Wickedneſs muſt it be ! as it is repreſented and *bewailed* in the xcth *Pſalm*, from the 5th Verſe : " For " we are *conſumed* by thine Anger, and by thy " *Wrath* we are troubled ! thou haſt ſet our " Iniquities before thee, our *ſecret Sins* in the " Light of thy Countenance ! for all our Days " are paſſed away in thy Wrath ; we ſpend our " Years as a *Tale* that is told ! — Who knoweth " the Power of thy *Anger*, even according to " thy *Fear* ſo is thy Wrath ! So teach us to " *number* our Days, that we may *apply* our Hearts " *unto Wiſdom.*

To *Man* GOD ſays, — " *This is Wiſdom* ! O that they were *wiſe*, that they underſtood *this*, and would *conſider their latter End* ! The wiſe Servants of GOD have ever done it and been *wiſe to Salvation :* More eſpecially *the Son of the Higheſt*, when he took our *mortal* Fleſh, was made *Sin* for us, and came into our World to *die* ; he *quickened* himſelf once and again, for *our* Sakes, and to give *us* an Example, from this

this *Motive*; "I must work *the Work* of Him "that sent me, while it is *Day*; the *Night* "*cometh* wherein no Man can work! And a-gain, —— "I have a *Baptism* to be baptised "with, and how am I *straitned* till it be ac-"complished. — The *Disciples of* JESUS might well *learn this* of Him, and *teach it* to others; as we read in the Epistles of St. *Peter* and *Paul*: "I will not be *negligent* to put you *always in* "*Remembrance* of these Things; yea, I think "it meet as *long* as I am in this *Tabernacle* of "Clay, to stir you up; knowing that I *also* "must *shortly* put off this my Tabernacle as "the LORD hath shewed me! — This I say "therefore, Brethren, *the Time is short!* it re-"maineth that both they that have *Wives* be "as though they had *none*; and they that *weep* "as though they wept *not*, and they that *rejoice* "as though they rejoiced not, and they that *buy* "as though they possessed not, and they that "*use* the World as not *abusing* it, because the "*Fashion* of it passeth away.

Thirdly, Let us the rather take a *thankful Notice* to the *Glory* of GOD, that the Life of SOME *is not so much in vain* as that of many others. — They have much *sooner* began to live to GOD, they have through Grace *done more* for Him the *few* Days they have lived, and it may be their useful Lives have been *prolong'd*.— So the *Face of Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and *Joseph* shone before the *Princes* among whom they sojourn'd! And so shone the Face of *Moses* and *Aaron* before the Congregation of *Israel* in the Wilderness, and *Caleb*'s also and *Joshua* then and in the Land of *Canaan*: after them also *Samuel* and

and *David* ſerv'd *their Generation by the Will of God!* but above *all* in the Days of the *New Teſtament* bleſſed *Paul* " was in *Labours* more " abundant, and CHRIST was *magnified in his* " *Body*, in Life and Death. — The *Glory* muſt be " given to GOD, and was ſo: *Not I, but the Grace* " *of GOD in me*; but the *Comfort* belongs to the " *Believer in* JESUS, and it is great in Life or " Death; nor can it be *in vain* in the LORD. " 1 Cor. xv. *ult.* Wherefore my beloved *Brethren*, " be ye *ſtedfaſt*, *unmoveable* and *always abounding* " *in the Work* of the LORD.

Here therefore I might have *added* and muſt add, 1. The *leſs* Life has been *in vain*, the more *Comfort in our Death* and in the Death of our *deareſt Friends*; when GOD takes *them* away from us, or calls *us* to take leave of them. — O in what *Serenity* and Peace are *ſuch* at Times enabled to bid *farewell* and breathe their laſt? as I am told the *Excellent Perſon* whoſe Remains we follow to the Grave this *Afternoon*, was *enabled* by Grace to do! to the *Admiration* of thoſe that miniſtred about her *Bed*, and to the great *Conſolation* of her HEAD and *Offspring!* and may it be for their and our ſpiritual Inſtruction, Admonition and Edification in Grace and Holineſs.

So *Hezekiah*, the pious King of *Judah*, turned his *Face* to the Wall and prayed, when he was bid *to put his Houſe in Order* for he muſt *die*; " LORD, *remember* (ſaid he) *how I have walked* " *before thee with a perfect Heart!*—And ſo the *bleſſed St. Paul* look'd *Death* in the Face and *triumph'd*; " the Time of my *Departure* is at hand, " I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed " my Courſe, I have kept the Faith! Hence-

" forth is reſerved for me the *Crown of Righte-*
" *ouſneſs* ! And not for *me only* but for *all that*
" *love* his Appearing, — And ſo when *Dorcas* was dead, they *wept* over Her and told her *good Deeds*, the *Garments* ſhe had made for the *poor* ; and were going to *bury* her with *Praiſes*, in the midſt of *Lamentation.* — And ſo like *Jehoiada* the Prieſt, let the loweſt with the *Higheſt* in the *Congregation*, be named and buried as among the *Kings of Judah* ; if they have *done Good in Iſrael.*

But then, on the other Hand, 2. The *longer our Life* is, and the *greater our Advantages* and Opportunities are for *doing Good* in the World, and the more *ſpecial our Obligations* ; and *yet* the leſs is done by us ; ſo much the more *in vain* has our Life been ! and the more Matter of *Humiliation*, Mourning and *Shame* remains to us ! the more Sorrow and *Fear* in a dying Hour, and *looking for of Judgment*, in the *Day of* CHRIST ! As it is written, " *Caſt the unprofitable Servant into utter Darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth.*

Fourthly, The ſhorter and *vainer* the preſent ſinful Life of Man is, the more let us *realize*, and ſtrengthen our *Faith* in this great *Truth*, — that GOD *never made any Thing in vain* ; and that MAN in particular was made in *the Perfection of Life and Happineſs* ; *wiſe and holy*, for a *bleſſed Immortality.*

The *Glory* of GOD, and the Honour of his *Creature*, require us to ſtrengthen and *eſtabliſh our Faith* in this *firſt Record* that GOD has given to Man concerning Himſelf — GOD made Man for the beſt *Ends*, and to the moſt glorious *Purpoſes.* What could be ſaid more great and good and *auguſt*, than what's ſaid of Man in his *Creation* ; Gen. i. 27.

i. 27. So GOD created Man in his *own Image*, in the *Image of* GOD created he him, *Male and Female* created He them ; and GOD *bleſſed them.* — Such Man came out of his *Maker's* Hand, a *living Soul*, never to have known Sin or Death, or to have been ſubjected to *Vanity* ! A Matter this is worthy of *everlaſting Remembrance*, and a Subject of our *perpetual Praiſes !* And it will be *ſung* of for ever in Heaven : *Pſal.* viii. 5.— ult. *Revel.* iv. 11.

We may apply to *Man* in his *firſt* Eſtate, and give *Glory* to GOD in thoſe *choſen Words* of the xxiſt Pſalm : " Thou didſt *prevent* him with the " Bleſſings of Goodneſs ! thou didſt put a *Crown* " of pure Gold on his Head ! Thou gaveſt him " *Life* in Perfection, even Length of Days for " ever and ever : *Honour and Majeſty* thou didſt " put upon him, and madeſt him *moſt bleſſed* for " ever ; exceeding *glad* with the *Light* of thy Coun- " tenance ! — Be thou exalted *Lord*, in thy own " Strength ! ſo will we *ſing* and praiſe thy Power.

Fifthly, Let this therefore *ſtill and quiet us* in all that GOD *orders* concerning us, all the Days of our *vain Life*, which we paſs as a *Shadow*.

The Providence of GOD is *perfect* ! there is no Room for any *Suſpicion* or Complaint, *Expoſtulation* or Charge reſpecting any Thing that may here befall us. *Clouds* and Darkneſs may be round about the *Throne* of GOD, but Righteouſneſs and *Judgment* his Habitation. He dwelleth in that *Light*, which no *Eye* can ſee. His Righteouſneſs is as the *great Mountains*, while his Judgments are as the great *Deep*. Let the *One* be always before our *Eyes*, while we cannot *ſee* at all into the *other*.

He is a *jealous GOD*, and therefore will not bear that *we* ſhould have any *Jealouſy* of his Government. He is perfect in *Knowledge*, we comparatively perfect *Ignorance*. How *unſearchable* are his Counſels, and his *Ways* paſt finding out!

Every *Event* of Providence, the *dark* as well as the bright, are the Iſſue and Reſult of his infallible *Foreknowledge* and immutable Decrees.— The *Chariot* with the *black Horſes*, as well as the *white*, came forth alike from between the *Mountains of Braſs*, Zech. vi. 1. Theſe are *ſhining* Mountains and immoveable: they caſt a Light and Glory upon all that comes forth *from between* them. The *black* Horſes *ſhine* in the *ſame* Light of GOD, his Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, as do the *white*: And it is of the *black*, that it pleaſed the Holy One to ſay, in the Hearing of the *Prophet*; "*Behold* THESE *have quieted my Spirit*: Zech. vi. 8. And what *quiets* the Spirit of the Lord, ſhould quiet *ours*; and *will* do ſo, if we deſire to be *holy wiſe and good* as He is.

I can never forget, how as I was once reading *that Chapter* in my Family, thoſe Words ſtruck me with a marvellous *Light* and Force; repreſenting to me the perfect *infinite Complacency* which the Soul of GOD has in all the *Events* of his Providence; which are All and every One of them altogether *ſuch* as they ſhould be; the full Accompliſhment of the everlaſting *Purpoſes* of his own Wiſdom Holineſs and Grace; wherein therefore the *Holy Spirit* of the Lord muſt have everlaſting *Reſt and Quiet*, Pleaſure and Satisfaction. — Can there be a more *calming* quieting Conſideration than this to the Spirit which GOD has made and ſanctified! has made to *govern*, and to be in Subjection unto his

his own holy, perfect and bleſſed Will ?— So *Abraham*'s Spirit was *quieted* when the *Horror of great Darkneſs* came upon him, and the *Lamp of Fire* paſſed between his *divided Sacrifice* ; though it only ſhewed him the *long fiery Trial in Egypt*, which his *Seed* were to paſs through in their Way to *Canaan*.— And ſo the Spirit of *Job* was *quieted* in the Will of GOD, when he bereaved him of all his *Children*, *Family and Subſtance* in one dark Day ! And he ſaid, " *Naked* came I out of my Mother's *Womb*, and naked ſhall I return ! the LORD *gave* and *the* LORD *has taken*, *bleſſed* be the Name of the LORD. —But to name a *Greater* than theſe,—So the Soul of CHRIST was quieted, John xii. 28. " Now is my Soul *troubled*, and what ſhall I *ſay ? Father*, *ſave me* from this Hour, but therefore came I unto this Hour ! *Father glorify thy Name.*

Let there be then in us a Conformity to our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the Will of our *Heavenly Father*, that his Soul may have *Pleaſure in us*, as it *has in Him*.—O Believer in JESUS ! may I *ſay* unto thee ? " *Quiet the* HOLY SPIRIT *of* GOD, by Quietneſs and *Submiſſion* to Him in all thy Afflictions ? This ſhall *pleaſe the* LORD better than the beſt *Sacrifice of Praiſe* thou canſt render to him. *Behold the Lamb of GOD*, be *meek and lowly* like Him, and find Reſt to thy Soul ! it pleaſed the LORD to *bruiſe him* and put him to *Grief* : He was *dumb* and opened not his Mouth ; and the *Pleaſure of the* LORD proſper'd in his Hand : Deſire to be found *one of his Seed*, and let Him ſee *the Travail of his Soul* in thy *Conformity* to Him.

What *if GOD wills*, after a Courſe of *ſhining* Circumſtances in this World, to break the beauteous *Body* or the lovely *Mind* to Pieces ! and to bring his

his *Cloud* over the *joyous Houſe* and Family, in the Day even of their *worſhiping and feaſting* as in the Day of *Job?* what belongs to us is, to *fall down and worſhip*,— " *naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked ſhall I return, the* LORD *gave and the* LORD *hath taken; bleſſed be the Name of the* LORD. Pſalm 88. 9, 18. " Mine *Eye mourneth* by Reaſon " of Affliction, I have *called* daily upon thee, I have " ſtretched out *my Hand* to thee! *Lover and Friend* " haſt thou put far from me and mine *Acquaintance* " into Darkneſs. Pſalm 62. 9. Surely Men of " *low* Degree are Vanity, and Men of *high* Degree " are a *Lie!* to be laid in the *Ballances* they are " *lighter than Vanity*! My Soul, *wait thou only upon* " *GOD*; for all my Expectation is from *Him.*

O that THOSE who are riſing up among us in *ſuperior* Circumſtances, and with promiſing *Expectations* from a vain and empty World, would betimes receive Conviction, and learn of *them*, who have wiſely gone before them, *without Elation or Pride of Life.*

Sixthly and laſtly, The *ſhorter* Time is, and the *vainer* the preſent Life and World may *ſeem* to any of us on the Account thereof; the more let us fix our *Eyes* and ſet our *Hearts* on the *Word of GOD*, which liveth and *abideth for ever*, and is *not a vain Thing*, but is our Life: Let us ſet our Heart (I ſay) on that *unſeen and eternal World* which the *Word of Life ſets before us*, and requires us to be paſſing our preſent *ſhort* Life in an earneſt and diligent *Preparation* for.

Let us bleſs GOD for JESUS CHRIST, and the Words of *Eternal Life* by *Him*, who has *aboliſhed Death* and *brought Life and Immortality to Light* in his Goſpel.— My whole *Context* leads us to HIM; to

to *ſing of the Mercies* of GOD through Him for ever and ever; and of the *Covenant* of GOD *with* Him, and *in Him* with all that *believe in* and *ſubmit* to him on the Terms of the Goſpel.

This is the *only Support* of a pious Soul under the *Vanity* of Life, the Proſpect of his own *Death*, and in his *Sorrows* over the *Dead in Him*. If in *this* Life only we had *Hope* we were miſerable; but now is CHRIST *riſen* from the Dead, and become the *Firſt-fruit* of them that *ſleep*: for if we belive that JESUS *died and roſe* again; even ſo *them* that *ſleep in* JESUS GOD will bring with Him. We muſt *raiſe our Eyes* therefore unto the *Glories* of that *bleſſed Day*, and turn them *away from beholding Vanity*, which will never *never* be thought of more; nor will ever ſuch a *Word* be heard again from a *Saint's* Lips; but even *Devils* will confeſs reſpecting *them* that *they* were not made in *vain*:—No, *happy the Day* wherein they were *born*, and the *Night* wherein they were *conceived!* no *Darkneſs* or any *Shadow of* Death can ever *ſtain* it, nor any Cloud dwell on it: But GOD will *regard it from above*, and his Saints may keep the Day of their *Death*; as their bleſſed *Birth-Day* into Glory Honour and Immortality.

More eſpecially, how will the righteous *ſhine forth* in the Kingdom of their *Saviour* in the Day of their Reſurrection? when CHRIST *will quicken their vile Bodies*, and faſhion them according to *his own* moſt glorious Body! When the *Glory of the Celeſtial* ſhall ſucceed, after the *Diſhonour* of the *Terreſtial* is ceaſed for ever! When what was ſown in Corruption ſhall be *raiſed* in Incorruption! what was ſown in *Weakneſs* ſhall be raiſed in *Power*! and the preſent *natural* Body ſhall be rais'd a *ſpiritual*!—*Such* is the Reſurrection

ſurrection of the *Juſt*, and bleſſed and *holy for ever* are all *They* that have Part therein.

Let us therefore be greatly *quickned by the bleſſed Hope* to paſs our *ſhort* Time and *vain* Life here, in the moſt ſerious and earneſt *Endeavours* to attain *that World*, even the *Reſurrection of the Juſt*. Let not the *Vanity* and Shortneſs of the *preſent* Life be *complained* of, but *improved*. Our *Time* is a *Talent* of infinite *Price*, for our diligent *redeeming* and improving till our LORD ſhall come; and *bleſſed is that Servant whom the LORD when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing*.

We have liv'd to good *Purpoſe* if we get well to Heaven. We ſhall then find that our Life and Labour has *not been in vain in the* LORD. Nay the *ſhorter* our Life is, and the *ſooner* we have *begun* to live to GOD, the more *wonderful* is the Gain and Advantage made! How abundant is the Reward of a ſhort Life of Duty and Sufferings! how vaſt that and how *ſmall* theſe! How *light* and for *a Moment* the One, and what an *eternal Weight* the other! as the Apoſtle teaches us to *reckon* and eſtimate, *Rom.* viii. 18. That the *Sufferings* of the preſent Life are *not worthy to be compared*, with the *Glory* to be revealed:—for which Cauſe (ſays he) we *faint not*; 2 Cor. iv. ult. But though our outward Man *periſh* yet the inward is *renewed* Day by Day; for our *light Affliction*, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and *eternal Weight* of Glory! while we *look not* at the Things that are *ſeen*, but at the Things that are *unſeen*; for the Things which are ſeen are *temporal*, but the Things which are *not ſeen are eternal*.

FINIS.